Trump Issues Chilling Warning Ahead of Iran Deadline

April 7, 2026 **by Dan McCue**

President Donald Trump addresses reporters in the White House briefing room on Monday. (Photo by Dan McCue)

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump issued a chilling warning to Iran's leaders Tuesday morning, just hours before his deadline for the regime to stop targeting its neighbors in the Middle East and fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again," Trump wrote in a social media post shortly after 8 a.m. Tuesday morning.

"I don't want that to happen, but it probably will," he said, writing on Truth Social.

"However, now that we have Complete and Total Regime Change, where different, smarter, and less radicalized minds prevail, maybe something revolutionarily wonderful can happen, WHO KNOWS?" the president continued.

"We will find out tonight, one of the most important moments in the long and complex history of the World. 47 years of extortion, corruption, and death, will finally end. God Bless the Great People of Iran!" he said in conclusion.

Trump's threat and tentative suggestion that there's still hope that Iran will capitulate before his deadline of 8 p.m. eastern time, came on a cool but pleasant spring morning in Washington, D.C.

The only notable event on the president's schedule Tuesday is a dinner with Sergio Gor, the U.S. ambassador to India, which will likely just be ending when the deadline elapses.

Trump's portentous warning came a day after he threatened to "obliterate" Iran's infrastructure if a deal to end the ongoing war is not reached by Tuesday night.

"Every bridge in Iran will be decimated by 12 o'clock tomorrow night, where every power plant in Iran will be out of business, burning, exploding and never to be used again. I mean complete demolition by 12 o'clock, and it will happen over a period of four hours if we wanted to — we don't want that to happen," Trump told reporters during a White House press conference.

And any deal must include the complete reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the critical shipping lane through which roughly 20% of global oil passes.

Iran has exerted control over the passage since the beginning of the war with the U.S. and Israel in February, though it has recently

permitted some ships to pass through following payment of a fee.

But that's nowhere near good enough for the president, who issued his threat on Truth Social just minutes into the period set aside for "executive time" on his daily calendar.

When the United States and Israel launched military strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, the president suggested the conflict would last roughly six weeks.

On Monday morning, during remarks ahead of the annual Easter egg roll at the White House, the president for the first time acknowledged that the Iranians are "capable fighters" and "very tough people."

"You don't mind when the energy is weak, but this enemy is strong," he said before adding, "Not so strong like they were a month ago. I can tell you, in fact, right now, that they're not too strong at all, in my opinion," he said.

President Donald Trump speaks to reporters outside the Oval Office on Monday, April 6, 2026. (Photo by Dan McCue)

Later, during his briefing room appearance, he suggested for the first time that the United States may ultimately be involved in rebuilding the Iranian infrastructure that is being destroyed by the intensive strikes of recent days.

"If that's the case, that last thing we want to do is start [the rebuilding] with power plants, which are among the most expensive things to replace, and the bridges," Trump said.

The president then recalled how he ordered the destruction of Iran's "biggest bridge" moments after his negotiating team of presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner, and special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, told him Iran was backing out of a potential deal.

"I told them, 'That's okay. Don't worry about it. Just look out your window and watch,'" Trump said. "Within 45 minutes I gave the order to knock out the bridge … 10 minutes after that, it was gone.

"Do I want to do that [again]? No. Do I want to destroy their infrastructure? No," he said. "It will take them a hundred years to rebuild. If we left today, it would take them 20 years to rebuild their country, and it would never be as good as it was.

"The only way they're going to be able to rebuild their country is to utilize the genius of the United States of America," he said.

Trump has been less clear on how he plans to ensure the Strait of Hormuz is opened and remains open after the hostilities end.

On Monday he told the crush of reporters in the briefing room that "we have to have a deal that's acceptable to me, and part of that deal is going to be, we want free traffic of oil and everything."

And while the United Kingdom last week convened 41 countries to discuss plans for the post-conflict operation of the strait, the president on Monday continued to bristle at what he has said is a complete lack of cooperation and support from U.S. allies.

"NATO is a paper tiger," he said. "We don't need them, obviously, because they have not helped at all. Just the opposite — they've

actually gone out of their way not to help. They did not even want to give us landing strips. Think of it.

"And it's not just NATO. You know who else didn't help us? South Korea didn't help us. Australia didn't help us. Japan. And we've got 50,000 soldiers in Japan to protect them from North Korea," he continued.

At the same time, the president lauded several countries for being "a little bit more involved" in the U.S. effort, all of them in the Middle East.

They included Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain.

At one point, a reporter asked Trump whether he would end the war while Iran was continuing to charge fees for passage through the strait.

"What about us charging tolls?" Trump responded.

"I'd rather do that than let them have them," he added. "Why shouldn't we? We're the winner."

"We won, OK? They are militarily defeated. The only thing they have is the psychology of 'oh, we're going to drop a couple of mines in the water,'" Trump continued. "We have a concept where we'll charge tolls."

Asked how the war could possibly be winding down — as he's previously suggested — when U.S. air strikes are intensifying, the president said "I can't tell you. I don't know."

"It really depends on what they do," he said. "This is a critical period. They have a period of, well, until tomorrow, at 8 o'clock."

"They asked for an extension of 10 days, which would have meant a deadline of Monday, which I thought was inappropriate, being the day after Easter," the president said. "I want to be a nice person, so we gave them until Tuesday. Now we'll see what happens. What I tell you is they are negotiating, we think, in good faith. But we're going to find out."

Trump was joined at his Monday news conference by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and CIA Director John Ratcliffe, among other administration officials. After acknowledging the presence of Witkoff, he turned again to the status of the negotiations.

"I think it's going fine," the president said. "Again, we'll have to see. You have to understand, we've been dealing with these people for 47 years. A month ago, we were [dealing] with a much more powerful Iran than it was at any other point during those 47 years. Not anymore.

"This should have been handled by seven presidents, a lot of presidents … this is not something I like doing. It's very dangerous … If we had not gone in with those beautiful B-2 bombers eight months ago and obliterated their [bomb-making infrastructure], Iran would have had a nuclear weapon by now.

"Israel would have been extinguished. Large portions of the Middle East would have been extinguished," he said. "We were not going to let that happen."

Dan can be reached at dan@thewellnews.com *and* @DanMcCue

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